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REVITALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Note by the President of the General Assembly

General Assembly resolution 46/77, which was adopted by consensus on 12 December 1991, invited "the President of the Assembly and the Secretary-General to undertake consultations to ensure that adequate staff is assigned and facilities provided to enable the President of the Assembly to carry out his functions and responsibilities and to report thereon as appropriate to the General Assembly".

On this basis, I initiated consultations with the previous Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and later with the new Secretary-General, His Excellency Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Both distinguished Secretaries-General expressed their willingness and desire to carry on the consultations and to have a satisfactory arrangement. However, I appreciate that the occupation of the former Secretary-General with the last few months of his mandate and the occupation of the new Secretary-General with the first few months of his mandate might not have enabled them to give the priority of consideration that this issue deserves.

The issue stands today where it began last year. The Office of the President of the General Assembly remains mostly dependent on the staff and support of the President's own government. This situation gives to the Office of the President a transitional nature, without the necessary institutional elements to enable it to play the full role envisaged for it by the membership of the United Nations - a major factor that could lead to the weakening of the General Assembly, the principal organ of the Organization.

After a full year's experience of the privilege of undertaking this responsibility, I feel more convinced than ever that the minimum framework necessary to give the Office of the President, which is at the centre of the

activity of the General Assembly, the necessary continuity remains vital. I should add that for future Presidents, and within the limits of the regular budget of the United Nations, a modest financial allowance should be accorded to the President's Office to meet the needs of fulfilling basic administrative and official travel expenses and hospitality requirements, in addition to other auxiliary expenses that could accrue.

I believe that it is unfair that a national Government that pays its assessed contribution to the regular budget of the United Nations should also have to cover the expenses of the Office of the President of the General Assembly, which serves the United Nations as a whole, especially as this might handicap a President of the Assembly whose country might feel financially constrained to bear the extra expenditures incurred.

I leave this matter for the General Assembly and the next President, hoping that this groundwork I have undertaken will be able to achieve a satisfactory conclusion that the General Assembly and the United Nations deserve.